

# CHAPTER 1



## PLACES AND PEOPLES: THE NEW AMERICAN MOSAIC

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The magnitude and character of recent immigration to the United States, popularly known as the post-1965 wave of immigration, continue to surprise policymakers and many experts. The first surprise was that it happened at all. The 1965 amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act, also known as the Hart-Celler Law, were a product of the civil rights era of the 1960s. Ending the infamous national-origin quotas enacted in the 1920s—the central objective of the 1965 amendments—was a high priority for members of Congress, many of whom were the children and grandchildren of Southern and Eastern European immigrants who had been excluded early in the twentieth century. The expectation was that there would be a small blip in arrivals from Italy, Greece, and a few other European countries as families divided by the immigration restrictions of the 1920s were allowed to be reunited, but that no long-term increase would result (Reimers 1998, chapter 3).

This expectation was not borne out, however. Almost 5 million immigrants came to the United States during the 1970s—the highest level of immigration, in both absolute and relative terms, since the early decades of the twentieth century (U.S. Department of Homeland Security 2003, 11). The 1970s were only the tip of the iceberg, however. The number of immigrants who arrived in the 1980s exceeded that of the 1970s, and both numbers were surpassed by arrivals in the 1990s. Not only were the numbers far higher than anyone expected, but the new immigrants came not so much from Europe but mainly from Latin America and Asia—regions that were not on the national agenda as sources for a major wave of immigration.

The new criteria for admission under the 1965 act were family reunification and scarce occupational skills (Keely 1979). The new preference system allowed highly skilled professionals—primarily doctors, nurses, and engineers from Asian countries—to immigrate and eventually to sponsor the entry of their family members. About the same time, and largely independent of the 1965 Immigration Act, immigration from Latin America began to rise. Legal and undocumented migration from Mexico surged after a temporary-farm-worker program known as the Bracero Program was shut down in 1964 (Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002). Migration from Cuba arose from the tumult of Fidel Castro’s revolution, as first elites and then professional, middle-class, and, finally, working class families fled persecution and the imposition of socialism in the 1960s and 1970s. During the 1980s, the Cubans were joined by refugees from Central American nations such as Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala (Lundquist and Massey 2005); and the collapse of the United States-backed government in South Vietnam after 1975 sent successive waves into the United States from Indochina (Massey 1995).

In recent years, the “immigration problem,” as it has been widely labeled, has been the subject of repeated national commissions, investigative reports, and congressional legislation (Smith and Edmonston 1997, chapter 2). Although the apparent goal of American policy has been to cap or reduce immigration, the opposite has occurred. By 2000, there were over 30 million foreign-born persons in the United States, almost one third of whom arrived in the prior decade. Adding together these immigrants and their children (the second generation), more than 60 million people—or one in five Americans—have recent roots in other countries (U.S. Census Bureau 2005).<sup>1</sup>

In the middle decades of the twentieth century, the era of mass immigration was a distant memory for most Americans, but by the end of the century, immigration had become a major population trend shaping American society. Immigrants and the children of immigrants are a visible presence in American educational institutions, from kindergartens to graduate schools. Many businesses, including food processing, taxi driving, custodial services, construction, and, of course, agriculture and domestic service, are dependent on immigrant labor. All political parties are wooing Hispanic and Asian voters, many of whom are newly naturalized immigrants. Immigration is very likely to be a continuing influence on the size, shape, and composition of the American population for the foreseeable future.

The latest surprise has been the shift in the geography of the new immigration (Singer 2004). One of the standard findings of research on the post-1965 immigration wave during the 1970s and 1980s was its concentration

in the states of New York, California, Texas, Florida, and Illinois, generally within a handful of “gateway” metropolitan areas such as New York, Los Angeles, Houston, Miami, and Chicago (Portes and Rumbaut 1996, chapter 2). Although different nationalities may have been concentrated in different areas (Puerto Ricans in New York, Cubans in Miami, Mexicans in Los Angeles, etc.) there was a common pattern and interpretation. Once immigrant pioneers had established a beachhead with ethnic neighborhoods and economic niches in certain industries, later immigrants flowed to the same places (Waldinger 1996; Waldinger and Lichter 2003). Migrants were drawn to immigrant-ethnic communities that could offer assistance to newcomers seeking housing, jobs, and the warmth of familiarity (Massey 1985).

The majority of new immigrants still settle in the traditional gateway cities; but as Douglas Massey and Chiara Capoferro show in chapter 2 of this volume, California and New York became much less dominant in the 1990s and during the early years of the new century than they were during the 1970s and 1980s. Immigrants now settle in small towns as well as large cities and in the interior as well as on the coasts. Immigrants have discovered the Middle West (see chapters 7 and 8 of this volume, by Katherine Fennelly and David Griffith, respectively) and the South (see chapter 6, by Katherine Donato and Carl L. Bankston III; chapter 9, by Helen B. Morrow; and chapter 10, by Jamie Winders) as well as traditional gateways in the East and West (see chapter 11, by Debra Lattanzi Shutika, and chapter 12, by Michael Jones-Correa). Given the virtual absence of immigrants in many regions of the United States up to 1990, even a small shift away from traditional gateways implied huge relative increases at new destinations. The absolute numbers of new immigrants arriving in Georgia, North Carolina, and Nevada may number only in the hundreds of thousands, but in relative terms the growth of immigrant communities in these areas is frequently off the charts.

The increasing diversity of immigrant settlements is inextricably bound up with the growing volume of immigration. Even if there had been no proportional shift in destination patterns, there would have been sizable increases in the absolute numbers of immigrants going to new destinations. The doubling of immigration from the 1970s to the 1990s remains a fundamental reason why the presence of immigrants is evident in so many places with little history of recent immigration. However, the growing volume of immigration has also had additional indirect effects on the destination choices of new and secondary migrants, as immigrant niches in gateway cities become saturated, making labor-market opportunities in other areas seem more attractive (Light 2006).

This volume offers new analyses and interpretations of the growth and settlement of immigrants in new destination areas. Drawing upon the empirical analyses assembled here, we can begin to see why immigration has become a national phenomenon and why immigrants are increasingly drawn to small and medium size towns throughout the United States. The studies reported here also offer tentative conclusions about the economic, social, political, and cultural responses to immigrant communities in new destinations. With their distinctive languages, appearances, and cultures, the new immigrants, along with their American-born children, at times encounter indifference and even hostility on occasion, but the dominant response still appears to be incorporation within the larger American “nation of immigrants.”

## **IMMIGRATION IN AN AGE OF INDUSTRIAL RESTRUCTURING**

At the individual level, potential migrants are affected by incentives and information. Potential migrants are pushed by hard times, a lack of jobs, or by a shortage of “good jobs” that provide desired social and economic rewards. Just as potential migrants differ in their skills and needs, what constitutes a sufficient push will vary between communities and between individuals in the same community. Landless and small-scale farmers may be pushed off their lands as commercial markets replace traditional norms of tenancy. At the other end of the spectrum, college graduates may take flight if they see only dead-end careers with few rewards and opportunities in the local labor market. People of all classes may depart in the absence of viable markets for capital and credit, seeking to self-finance home acquisition with earnings from international migration.

Economic pulls attract migrants in ways that complement the variety of push factors. The promise of wages, even at the lowest levels of compensation, may be very attractive for poor foreign workers with few choices locally. In professional and high-tech circles, scholarships, prestige, and opportunities for challenging careers lure workers to relocate internationally. Sometimes, however, the mere existence of labor demand is not enough, and migratory processes must be jump-started through deliberate recruitment, as during the Bracero Program from 1942 to 1964 and with the various visa programs for temporary workers today.

People can only respond to the various pushes and pulls if they are aware of them, of course; and individuals are not wholly independent actors, but are constrained by information about opportunities in distant locations. Social ties embedded within migrant networks can provide this

information and lower the costs of migration. Brave and resourceful pioneers may be willing to migrate in the face of limited knowledge and to bear the costs of the journey and settlement on their own, but pioneers are, by definition, a rare species. Most migrants follow in the footsteps of friends and family members who have already made the journey and can offer advice, encouragement, and funds to subsidize the costs of transportation and settlement. Migration streams from a specific place of origin to a specific place of destination reflect the inherent tendency of earlier migrants to assist their relatives and neighbors with temporary housing and the search for employment. The hypothesis of “cumulative causation” posits that social networks of friends and family broaden the base of migration so much that other factors—those that originally caused the migration—become less important over time (see Massey et al. 1993, 448–50).

The enumeration of micro-level pushes and pulls and the measurement of their effects together constitute only the first step in explaining why people move from place to place. A larger task is to account for the structural conditions that give rise to microeconomic incentives in places of origin and destination. In general, neither absolute poverty nor the poorest places are associated with high levels of migration (Portes and Rumbaut 1996, 272). Most peasants and laborers, however poor and destitute they may appear to denizens of developed nations, have a place in traditional societies that provides them with subsistence and reciprocal ties of obligation to friends and family within their social class. Catastrophic natural disasters, wars and civil violence, political crises, and other social transformations are among the “shocks” that upset traditional societies and provide the impetus to migrate.

In modern times, however, “economic development” has generally been most forceful in promoting long-distance migration, embracing such diverse processes as the commercialization of agriculture, the development of wage labor markets, the creation of modern consumer tastes, and the loss of traditional forms of social insurance. Once migration develops for these structural reasons, the self-reinforcing nature of social networks and cumulative causation take hold and flows increase and broaden to include other groups far removed from the initial pioneers (Massey and Zenteno 1999).

Immigrants, of course, are drawn by the same economic and social currents that affect domestic migrants, though there are critical differences. Most important, international migrants are constrained by political factors, including state policies designed to minimize, control, and regulate flows across borders (Massey 1999). These regulations inevitably raise the costs of migration in financial terms and in other ways that affect liberties and even life itself (Eschbach et al. 1999). For those who qualify for legal entry, immigration typically requires the payment of fees, long waits

in bureaucratic queues, repeated visits to consulates or embassies, and innumerable indignities and delays before final approval (Jasso and Rosenzweig 1990; see also chapter 2, this volume). For others with fewer resources or family connections in the United States, illicit or undocumented migration may be the only means of entry, but clandestine migration comes with additional risks of apprehension, criminal prosecution, imprisonment, and even death during the crossing of treacherous borders (see Singer and Massey 1998).

In contrast to the relatively well developed body of theory and research on the forces that promote international migration, less theoretical attention has been paid to those influencing the selection of destinations within the United States. In part, this gap occurs because the reasons seem almost too obvious to many observers. Although there is some variation by nationality, the majority of immigrants have traditionally settled in a handful of large metropolitan cities on the West and East coasts characterized by expanding wealth, dynamic labor markets, and already well-established immigrant communities (Portes and Rumbaut 1996, chapter 2). Even when the federal authorities have established programs of spatial dispersion, as was the case with Cuban and Vietnamese refugees, secondary migration revealed a seemingly iron law of spatial concentration. New immigrants tend to settle in the largest cities where earlier immigrants of the same national origins have previously settled. In addition to the social and economic support provided by earlier arrivals, large global cities also generate a high demand for informal-sector service jobs that attracted new international migrants (Sassen 1991).

The chapters in the first part of this volume offer glimpses into the emerging pattern of settlement in new destinations for immigrants to the United States. The big five destination states (New York, California, Illinois, Texas, and Florida) were still attracting most immigrants in the late 1990s, but the proportion of Mexican immigrants going to them has dropped to 60 percent, and less than half of other immigrant streams are now settling in traditional destinations (see chapter 2, this volume). The shift in the geography of immigration has been especially dramatic for Mexicans, who from 1965 to 1990 focused overwhelmingly on destinations in California, and to a lesser extent Chicago and selected cities in Texas. Because of the dramatic escalation of border enforcement efforts in El Paso and San Diego, historically the two busiest border crossings, long-established flows were deflected to new crossing points and new destination regions (Orrenius 2004; Massey, Durand, and Malone 2002).

Because the volume of immigration has increased dramatically, these shifts do not necessarily imply a lessening of the absolute numbers of

immigrants going to traditional destination cities and states. For example, the number of recent immigrants who arrived over the prior decade in metropolitan areas jumped from 8.3 million in 1990 to 12.4 million in 2000 (see chapter 4, this volume, by Katharine Donato, Charles Tolbert, Alfred Nucci, and Yukio Kawano). This shift represents a dramatic increase, to be sure, but since it builds on past trends, it is not wholly unexpected and the largest metropolitan areas are long accustomed to the arrival of foreigners. In new destination areas, however, the sudden upturn of immigration is front-page news.

Although smaller in absolute terms than in established areas, the growing number of foreigners is a new phenomenon—at least in the memories of those alive today. Immigrant laborers are creating ethnic niches in local labor markets and schools and churches are struggling to adapt to an upsurge in Spanish-speaking newcomers, as day-laborer sites have created a political storm in some areas. Which immigrants are going to these new destination areas and why? The classical theories of cumulative causation and global cities predict continuity, not change, in the traditional patterns of immigrant settlements; the border enforcement trends highlighted by Massey and Capoferro (see chapter 2) account for some of the changes, but they don't explain everything.

Through a variety of empirical approaches, the chapters in this volume suggest several potential explanations. Mark Leach and Frank Bean (chapter 3) find that immigrants to new destinations are generally heterogeneous in terms of individual traits and characteristics, but the places they go have basic economic facts in common: they tend to be places with well-developed and growing low-skill service sectors, thus pointing toward industrial restructuring as a driving force behind geographic diversification. They also show, once again, that once a new destination has attracted a critical mass of new immigrants, others are relatively more likely to follow them. Thus, industrial restructuring creates an initial demand for immigrants in new locations and then processes of cumulative causation take over to channel subsequent cohorts of migrants to these new destinations.

Likewise, in their study of immigrants to new destinations in 1990 and 2000, Donato, Tolbert, Nucci, and Kawano (chapter 4) find that the characteristics of immigrants to nonmetropolitan destinations in the South and Midwest were quite different from those going to traditional areas of destination. Especially within counties where the native white population was declining, the new immigrants tended to be younger, more poorly educated, more recently arrived, and more Mexican; Donato and colleagues also find, like Leach and Bean, that the new immigrants were moving in response to growth in particular low-wage industries.

Thus immigrants appear to be overrepresented in secondary-labor-market jobs that are typically shunned by native-born workers. The presence and expansion of poorly paid jobs that are difficult, dirty, and sometimes dangerous in small towns and rural areas is a common thread in many “new destination” areas. Leach and Bean report that Mexican migrants to new destinations are likely to be employed in construction and services whereas Donato and colleagues find that new immigrants to nonmetropolitan areas are increasingly employed in manufacturing. Where the proportion of immigrants employed in manufacturing declined in metropolitan areas from 1990 to 2000, in nonmetropolitan areas it significantly increased. The native-born, meanwhile, were less likely to work in manufacturing in 2000 than in 1990, regardless of location.

These patterns are most salient in what Donato and colleagues call “offset counties”—those in which immigrant growth offsets a population decline among natives. In these areas, immigrants in general and Mexican immigrants in particular were overrepresented in meatpacking, leather processing, and carpet and rug manufacture. Although these industries were present in 1990, they expanded over the ensuing decade and immigrants appear to have played a major role in their growth in the face of stiff global competition.

It thus appears that the increasing geographic diversity of immigration to the United States is related to broader structural changes in the American economy and to the decreasing attractiveness of certain jobs to native-born workers. This volume offers two detailed studies of industrial restructuring to buttress this interpretation. Emilio Parrado and William Kandel, in chapter 5, analyze the changing structure of the meatpacking and construction industries and Donato and Bankston in chapter 6 study changes in southern Louisiana firms that provide services to oil extraction and refining industries along the Gulf Coast.

“Industrial restructuring” is a generic term used by these authors to describe shifts in the American economy away from large-scale capital-intensive production and a relatively well-paid, unionized, and mostly native workforce toward labor-intensive production and low-paid, non-unionized, foreign workforces. International competition and technological innovation have cut the profit margins of older companies that held virtual monopolies on the manufacture, distribution, and marketing of goods within many industrial sectors. Some American manufacturers were unable to compete with cheaper imports and they shifted production to plants overseas in low-wage countries; but in other cases foreign firms opened more efficient, non-unionized manufacturing plants

in the United States, often in rural or small towns with lower prevailing wages.

One of the common features of industrial restructuring is the prevalence of labor subcontracting and the overall informalization of labor relations (Portes and Sassen 1987). Subcontracts to smaller firms allow larger companies to achieve greater flexibility and minimize employment costs, but smaller firms have lower profit margins and are much less likely to offer fringe benefits such as health insurance or retirement programs. Donato and Bankston (chapter 6) provide a classic description of the operation of the informal economy and the emergence of a segmented labor market in their account of changes in the industrial organization of the oil and gas industry in southern Louisiana.

Over the last few decades, the oil industry has experienced recurrent booms and busts. Labor needs during periods of expansion are supplied by hundreds of small and medium-size firms that compete for contracts to build and repair ships and equipment and to supply services needed for offshore oil rigs, ports for supertankers, refineries, and natural gas pipelines. Although most of these workers (such as welders and pipe fitters) are skilled and their wages are well above the minimum, the industry's boom-and-bust cycle has led to increasing levels of contract employment and high worker turnover. With declining job security, native-born workers, and especially their children, have tended to look for alternative careers. Some seek to become small-business owners or managers; others have found more secure jobs in the formal sector. As a result, shortages of labor during periods of rapid expansion have increasingly been met by immigrant workers who are available, flexible, and willing to accept unstable conditions of employment that native-born workers find intolerable.

Trends in the construction and meatpacking industries, as presented by Parrado and Kandel, are quite different both from each other and from the southern Louisiana petroleum economy, though one feature is consistent: the need for a plentiful and flexible workforce to occupy disagreeable jobs. During the 1980s and 1990s, meatpacking and other food-processing industries were largely deskilled and increasingly dominated by vertically integrated firms that sought to remain competitive by decentralizing production to rural areas of the South and Midwest. Fennelly, in chapter 7, cites the case of a meatpacking firm in Minnesota that closed its unionized plant and then reopened the same plant as a non-union shop hiring only immigrant workers.

The construction sector has grown most rapidly in America's "exurbs"—small towns on the periphery of expanding metropolitan areas. As shopping centers, strip malls, and housing developments have developed apace while

central cities have declined, small companies and competitive labor markets have kept wages in the construction sector low. Although immigrants do not dominate the construction sector, they provide an important source of labor in an economic arena that has become less attractive to native-born workers.

Taken collectively, the chapters in the first half of this volume clarify the major cause for the decentralization of immigrant labor away from gateway cities on the East and West Coast to medium-size and small communities in the Midwest and South. American industries and employers, facing greater international competition and declining profit margins, have sought to cut costs through subcontracting, deskilling, and decentralizing production to areas with lower wage rates. Although not all industries restructure in the same fashion, they all seek to achieve common outcomes that affect workers—lower wages, fewer unions, reduced fringe benefits, and easier layoffs. These “new jobs” are not attractive to American-born workers, especially younger workers with the credentials or connections to find formal-sector employment. Because immigrants have fewer options and are generally more tolerant of difficult working conditions and job instability, especially if they lack documents, they fill the gap in an increasingly segmented domestic labor market.

The transformation of meatpacking from a skilled trade of unionized craft workers in large cities to an industrial production line of unskilled, non-unionized workers in rural and small towns may be the most obvious case of industrial restructuring, but similar processes are reported in almost every chapter in this volume, from welders in southern Louisiana, to construction workers in North Carolina, to domestic service workers in Nashville, to mushroom workers in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. But settlement patterns are also shaped by geographic considerations. Donato and colleagues show that many of the new nonmetropolitan immigrant destinations are closely connected to Interstate 35, which winds its way north from Texas to the Midwest and provides an accessible pathway by which products can reach urban markets.

Finally, social mechanisms allow immigrant workers to respond to changes in economic demand. Just as social networks and institutions of mutual support have led to the concentration of immigrants in traditional gateway cities, immigrant entrepreneurs and middlemen quickly recruit friends, families, and co-ethnics to new destination areas. Each pioneer immigrant community creates the potential for additional immigration through network-driven processes of cumulative causation, and eventually for the creation of satellite settlements in nearby towns where immigrant niches can be reproduced.

## RESPONSES TO THE NEW IMMIGRANTS

During the first few decades after the post-1965 wave of immigration began, most native-born Americans had relatively little personal contact with immigrants. The concentration of immigrant families in Los Angeles, New York, Miami, Chicago, and a few other places meant that most Americans, especially those in the South, had only fleeting experiences with foreigners. There was, of course, an intense national debate in the 1970s and 1980s over immigration policy, immigrant adjustment, and a widespread perception that America's borders were "broken," but during this period these conditions were generally distant from the day-to-day lives of most Americans. Although immigration may have been viewed as a "crisis," for many citizens it was a crisis in the abstract.

As the chapters in this volume make clear, the situation in the early twenty-first century is quite different. With immigrant communities popping up in many new places and the growing presence of monolingual Spanish speakers in schools and hospitals, new questions about ethnic diversity and assimilation are confronting American communities that have not experienced them in recent memory—in some cases in over two hundred years. Although solutions to some issues may be relatively painless, such as hiring translators or bilingual staff in public offices providing health care, police, and other services, other issues raise more fundamental questions about access to opportunity, social justice, inter-group relations, and, of course, identity.

With their keen analytic eyes focused on these social problems, the authors of the last six chapters address the potential for xenophobic responses to immigration in new destination areas. They offer clear evidence that many new immigrants are not being completely welcomed nor even accepted in new destination communities. The United States has a long and sordid history of intolerance and organized discrimination against African Americans, American Indians, Mexican Americans, and other minorities (Alba and Nee 2003; Lieberman 1980; Massey and Denton 1994; Montejano 1987); and social scientists in recent years have been among the leading truth tellers who have documented racial and ethnic disparities and the yawning gap between the noble words of America's founding documents and the reality of injustice and segregation.

In vivid accounts drawn from Fennelly's focus group interviews (chapter 7), working class Minnesotans voice their fears that Hispanics, Somalis, and other newcomers bring crime, economic competition, and a tax burden to their communities. These people are also concerned that immigrants do not seem to be committed to learning English and assimilating to American

society. Minnesota survey data show that perceptions of the “Hispanic burden” are strongest among whites with the least education who are living in nonmetropolitan areas. Many of these people have neither the substantive knowledge nor the practical experience to deal with unfamiliar languages and cultures, especially in a context where the newcomers are perceived as competitive threats.

In his overview of immigrants to four small-town “new destination” communities in chapter 8, David Griffith finds little overt hostility but does report a variety of responses ranging from indifference to paternalism to exploitation that are linked to class relations between immigrants and natives and among the immigrants themselves. Jamie Winders (chapter 10) finds that both black and white natives in Nashville are quite uncertain about where Hispanics are supposed to fit into the American mosaic of race and ethnicity. She reports that residents of this city do not have a clear conceptual map of how to categorize the new immigrants within a social context that has historically been dominated by a white-black color line. Especially in the South, Americans are used to thinking in black and white racial terms—literally and figuratively—and are still unsure about what to make of the new brown-skinned arrivals. In this region, race relations are colored with the history of state-sanctioned discrimination and segregation, and the wounds from this long history are undercurrents in almost every political and social discussion about persisting inequality and injustice in the United States (see Fredrickson 2003).

Like Winders, Marrow, in chapter 9, reports on incipient tensions between African Americans and Hispanic newcomers in the South. Since many new immigrants fill jobs at the bottom of the occupational ladder and therefore seek low-cost housing, there is a high likelihood that blacks and Hispanics will come to see themselves as competitors in labor and housing markets. Some African Americans also resent that Hispanic immigrants receive the benefits of affirmative action even if they have just arrived in the United States. In North Carolina, Morrow reports more competition and tension between African Americans and Hispanics in rural areas with a larger African American population than those with a smaller African American population, though the relative amount of tension is quite different in the political and economic realms. In areas with large black populations, the demographic weight of African Americans combined with the lack of political voice among Hispanics mitigate the political threat of the new immigrants, underscoring the importance of the demographic as well as economic and social context of reception.

In her social history of immigration and community festivals in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, Debra Lattanzi Shutika, in chapter 11, documents

how local whites first ignored the presence of the local Mexican community and then attempted to incorporate them but also to control the expression of Mexican culture to conform to their preferences and preconceptions. When the Mexican community wanted to create a more authentic festival, the local authorities intervened to marginalize their efforts, forcing them to celebrate a minor Mexican holiday rather than that which was increasingly being used by the alcohol industry as a sales vehicle than acknowledging their own national independence day, which was of little commercial interest in the United States.

These accounts, perhaps structured by prior assumptions, might be interpreted as evidence of the persistence of American hostility to new immigrants and a continuation of the xenophobia that characterized responses to immigration early in the twentieth century. As noted earlier, there is a long history of prejudice and discrimination against native and foreign minorities by old-stock white Americans (Higham 1988). With a muddled picture and conflicting evidence, it is easier to see a pattern of continuity than to search through the inconsistencies. Nonetheless, there is sufficient evidence to indicate that history is not repeating itself entirely, and a new paradigm of immigrant inclusion may be emerging.

In her Minnesota telephone survey, Fennelly recounts that native whites generally report positive feelings toward Hispanics, with two thirds agreeing that Hispanics make a contribution to the economy. Amazingly, two thirds of whites report that they like having Hispanics as coworkers, friends, next-door neighbors, and even as family members. Not all Minnesotans feel this way, of course, and many people have decidedly mixed or even negative feelings about the Hispanic newcomers in their midst. In focus-group discussions, white Minnesotans expressed positive and empathetic sentiments about Hispanics as well as concerns about the effects of immigrants on public safety, the quality of schools, property values, and employment opportunities. Now, as in the past, perhaps the most characteristic reaction to new immigrants is one of ambivalence.

Such ambivalence is probably a more accurate barometer of the feelings of small-town residents, who tend to fear social change, especially when it comes in the form of strangers who are viewed as being in direct competition for jobs. The closure of a unionized meatpacking plant and the replacement of local workers with immigrants quite understandably shake the economic confidence of local workers and leave them vulnerable to anti-immigrant rhetoric promulgated by political demagogues. It is entirely understandable that there are negative sentiments toward immigrants, but the overall picture still shows a significant degree of acceptance and even of a positive reception.

Griffith's study of community responses to Hispanic immigrants in four rural communities in the Midwest and South (chapter 8) suggests they have been met by growing acceptance. Initially Hispanic men were recruited to work in agriculture and food processing, but over time they have moved into a wider variety of occupations and industries and some have become very successful entrepreneurs. Hispanic families with children have also arrived, and there is much greater participation in schools, churches, and other local institutions as well as greater geographic dispersion into nearby communities. These changes have made it more difficult to stereotype or pigeonhole Hispanics as a monolithic community separate from native-born Americans, thus confirming yet again Gordon Allport's (1954) contact hypothesis.

According to Griffith, Hispanics are often viewed positively because they have given economic and social vitality to declining industries and communities. Their presence has also helped to keep some local schools open and has given a new mission to local churches. Some employers have shifted from an acceptance of immigrant workers to active efforts to hire more. Another indication of an emerging positive response is that many public institutions, especially in health care, are seeking Spanish-speaking staff and volunteers to provide better services to those who cannot speak English. These changes do not mean that inter-ethnic relations are always harmonious or that stereotypes have disappeared—simply that Hispanics are increasingly being considered part of the local communities with needs that should be addressed by public authorities.

Given that Hispanics and African Americans are often competing for jobs, the potential for black-brown antagonism is real. Nonetheless, public opinion polls generally show that blacks remain favorably disposed toward immigrants (Smith and Edmonston 1997, 392), and Marrow (chapter 9, this volume) reports incipient signs of a new "black-brown" political coalition in one county where both groups were in the minority. The ambiguity of where Hispanics "fit" in the American race and ethnic mosaic (see chapter 10, this volume, by Jamie Winders) suggests that immigration could function as a social force to stimulate a reconceptualization of race and ethnicity away from the traditional black-white dichotomy toward a more nuanced conceptualization of race as a continuum intertwined with social class, as it is in Latin America.

The historical race relations model of "us versus them" is a paradigm inherited from an era when a difference in skin color meant destiny. Hispanic origin, like some European-origin categories, combines elements of physical appearance, language, and culture. Most Hispanics are of mixed European-Amerindian or European-African origins. Changes in status,

mother tongue, and culture sometimes allow for ethnic identity to be a matter of choice, especially for the children and grandchildren of immigrants (Smith and Edmonston 1997, 113–22). Another important force is intermarriage, which is creating blended populations of European, Hispanic, and Asian ancestry (Bean and Stevens 2003, Chapter 9). To the extent that immigration is changing the popular American understanding of race and ethnicity from fixed and unchangeable categories to a conceptual framework that emphasizes diversity and overlapping ancestries, it might be possible to transcend the traditional racial dichotomy.

In chapter 12, Michael Jones-Correa reports that the growth of the population of minority and immigrant students in two wealthy suburbs of Washington, D.C., could have been the source of major political struggles as middle-class whites tried to protect their “quality schools” from immigrant children—but this generally did not happen. Although conflict did occur in a few instances, in the institutional context of public schools as a common resource and with leadership from school administrators guided by professional ethics instead of a desire to hoard scarce goods, there was actually a massive redistribution of local funds to support the schools with the most-disadvantaged students.

A look backward to the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries reveals how different and much more tolerant contemporary American society is when compared to the past. In the decades prior to the American Civil War, the Know-Nothing movement directed vitriolic hatred at Catholic immigrants, particularly from Ireland. Although the political success of the Know-Nothing Party eroded with the outbreak of the Civil War, the Know-Nothings were merely the first in a long series of American organizations that mobilized hatred and violence against perceived outsiders well into the middle decades of the twentieth century (Higham 1988).

Anti-immigrant sentiments resumed in the second half of the nineteenth century, primarily directed at Chinese. By 1882, the anti-Chinese coalition had become so strong that Congress enacted the so-called “Chinese Exclusion Act” (Hutchinson 1981, 77–84; Lee 2003); when employers responded by recruiting Japanese workers instead, the government responded by negotiating a “Gentlemen’s Agreement” with Japan wherein Japanese authorities agreed to prevent the emigration of its citizens to the United States.

With immigration from Asia effectively closed off, during the first decades of the twentieth century the anti-immigration movement concentrated its attention on Catholics and Jews from Eastern and Southern Europe—the “new immigrants” of their day. The hysteria against foreigners came to a head after the First World War, culminating in 1921

and 1924 with the inclusion of “national origins quotas” in American immigration law, which barred admission to immigrants from anywhere except northwestern Europe (Bernard 1981, 492–93). The enactment of the quotas, along with the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, succeeded in curtailing immigration to the United States for several decades (Massey 1985).

Perhaps the most important force moving the United States toward limits on immigration in the past was the rising tide of nativism—a fear of foreigners that gradually became intertwined with racial ideology in the first two decades of the twentieth century. American nativism had deep roots in anti-Catholicism, anti-Semitism, and a fear of foreign radicals, but by the late nineteenth century (Higham 1988, chapter 1) the belief in the inherent superiority of the Anglo-Saxon “race” had become the dominant element of American racial ideology. These beliefs and the link to immigration restriction had widespread support not only among threatened working class natives, but also among many well-educated elites (Baltzell 1964).

Expressions of intolerance in American society, including indifference and a widespread lack of sympathy for the problems of immigrants, continue to characterize contemporary American society, but early-twenty-first-century American society is a far cry from what it was before the 1960s, when bigotry was explicitly built into immigration law. President Truman, in the message accompanying his veto of the 1952 McCarran-Walter Immigration Act, which reaffirmed the 1920s national origins quotas (and was subsequently passed by Congress anyway), explained the discriminatory character of American immigration policy as follows (quoted in Keely 1979, 17–18):

The quota system—always based upon assumptions at variance with our American ideals—is long since out of date. . . . The greatest vice of the present system, however, is it discriminates, deliberately and intentionally, against many of the peoples of the world. . . . It is incredible to me that, in this year of 1952, we should be enacting into law such a slur on the patriotism, the capacity, and the decency of a large part of our citizenry.

In overriding Truman’s veto, members of the House and Senate simply reflected the popular opinion of most Americans that foreigners were not wanted.

These sentiments appear to have changed in the last few decades of the twentieth century. Although there have been persistent efforts to slow down the pace of immigration since 1965 and the passage of the Hart-Celler

law, none have been successful; and although there are still voices of nativism in the anti-immigrant community, immigrants appear to have been tolerated and even accepted by increasing proportions of the native-born American population. As more immigrants and their children become part of the American mainstream and ultimately voters, there is even less likelihood that new barriers to immigration will be enacted.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The increasing geographic dispersion of immigrants throughout American society reflects the rising volume of contemporary immigration and the growing dependence of the American economy on immigrant labor. With more than a million immigrants entering the United States annually, their presence has become increasingly visible throughout the country. But there are other factors besides mere numbers drawing immigrants and their families away from Los Angeles, New York and other gateway cities and toward small towns in Iowa, Georgia, and North Carolina. Competition in the increasingly globalized world economy has lowered the relative earnings of American industrial workers. As American consumers have benefited from cheaper, and often better, products and services from abroad, many workers have seen the promise of reliable lifetime employment, fringe benefits, social insurance, and adequate pensions disappear.

Not all workers and industries have been affected similarly by global competition, but the pressure to cut costs has encouraged many employers to look for employees who are willing to work harder for less compensation. Perhaps the supply of immigrant workers has emboldened more employers to increase their demand for such workers; whatever the precise sequence of cause and effect, there is clearly a reciprocal dynamic between globalization, industrial restructuring, and immigration, especially from Mexico. Coming to fill jobs that are no longer attractive to native-born workers and that would not even exist were it not for immigrants' taking them, Mexicans are not only the most numerous immigrants but also the most overrepresented among those taking jobs requiring the least education.

The increasing availability of immigrant workers and their geographic dispersion throughout the country are not simply the product of large corporations trying to lower labor costs. Many individual American families, too, are purchasing more "immigrant labor" to replace traditional home-produced goods and services, including child care, lawn care, gardening, and food preparation (in restaurants, in grocery stores, or at home). The lower wages of immigrants have kept consumer prices lower in the United States than in other industrial countries, and smaller communities,

including the “exurbs” on the periphery of large cities, have become more attractive to the native-born as the cost of living, and housing in particular, has risen to record heights in metropolitan areas on the East and West coasts. These same economic forces create economic demand that “pulls” increasing numbers of immigrants to many of the new destination areas.

Although most immigrants still live and work in large metropolitan areas, including the suburbs of gateway cities, there was a real shift in patterns of immigrant settlement during the 1990s and this has continued unabated into the early years of the current century. The new geography has made immigration a national rather than a regional phenomenon, and immigrant entrepreneurs as well as labor recruiters and employers have been critical links in the process.

Immigrants typically enter new destination areas as strangers with a cultural outlook shaped by their country of origin and limited English fluency. Competition over jobs, especially in an age of downsizing and outsourcing, clearly exacerbates tensions. With little experience in cross-cultural communications and few institutions in existence to integrate strangers, it is not surprising that small-town America has been indifferent, insensitive, and sometimes even hostile to newcomers. The popular image of small towns as parochial and suspicious of outsiders has some validity.

Nonetheless, immigrants and their families seem to have found a place in many new destination communities. One simple reason is that immigrants often create their own communities through kinship networks, mutual aid associations, religious institutions, and even sports clubs. Moreover, in many communities there are native-born Americans who, because of religious convictions, moral principles, or memories of their own immigrant forebears, reach out and assist the strangers. Perhaps the major reason for the acceptance of immigrants in many areas, however, is functional interdependence. Immigrant workers fill economic niches that keep some industries in business; immigrants are willing to provide low-cost services that might not otherwise be available; immigrants create economic demand for housing and local enterprises; and immigrant families also provide a clientele for schools, churches, and other organizations, many of which include natives. Although social interactions might begin with stereotypes, over the long term, the culture of the new immigrants, including their work ethic and familial commitments, can also become the basis of mutual respect.

We do not wish to paint over or minimize the frequent problems experienced by immigrants in the contemporary United States. Immigration is not a smooth process. Long-distance migration often begins with economic dislocation at places of origin and destinations. Dislocation, adjustment, and adaptation are often euphemisms for the painful process of

separation and loss for immigrants as well as the costs of change endured by immigrant-receiving communities. Yet there are also positive benefits from immigration—the economic gains for individuals and the communities in which they settle, as well as the broadening of minds that comes with new experiences and associations. The balancing of these losses and gains are likely to be major challenges for more American communities, large and small, in all parts of the country for the foreseeable future, as the United States continues to elaborate its historical destination as a nation of immigrants.

## NOTES

1. The formal definition of an immigrant is a foreign-born person who receives an immigrant visa (“green card”). However, about one half of persons acquiring immigrant visas are already present in the United States. In this volume, the foreign-born population, as counted in censuses and surveys, is considered to be equivalent to the immigrant population, although many of the foreign-born do not intend to become permanent residents. The general patterns reported here are similar regardless of the definition of the immigrant population.

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